



# Above and Beyond

## CANADIAN STUDENT LEADERSHIP NEWS AND VIEWS

A CANADIAN STUDENT LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

VOL 21 NO 2

### CSLC 2018

The Canadian Student Leadership Conference will celebrate its 34th anniversary in Alberta in 2018. Join over 1,200 student delegates and advisors in Edmonton, Canada's Festival City.

**Dates:** Sept. 25 to Sept. 29, 2018

**Location:** Harry Ainlay High School, Edmonton, Alberta

CSLA has once again applied to the Department of Canadian Heritage for travel grants to defray the cost of student travel to the national conference. This information will be available when registration opens online in March for the conference.

Students will be billeted for the conference with local families. Advisors should book accommodations early at the Delta Hotel in Edmonton South.

Registration for the conference will open online at the end of March 2018. You can register for the pre-conference tour to Jasper and the Edmonton region when registration opens.

Your co-chairs for CSLC 2018 are:  
Gane Olsen  
Sue Dvorack  
[sue.dvorack@epsb.ca](mailto:sue.dvorack@epsb.ca)

The website for the conference is:  
[cslc2018.studentleadership.ca](http://cslc2018.studentleadership.ca)



## You are the Breath of Spirit!

Wind doesn't just happen: something needs to heat up an area and then as the air rises because of this heat, new air moves in from a low pressure area to fill the space. School Spirit doesn't just happen: someone needs to energize a space and then as the energy expands, other people rush in to see what's going on and join in on the fun. True School Spirit doesn't just happen: it is the intentional result of an organized and coherent plan and the focused energy of a group of people.

Every school is a complex community, and most staff and students are quite happy and comfortable in their own busy silos. A sports team winning a city or provincial championship will bring about a rushing of people to the fun and energy spot, but this is a peak event and you cannot base your school spirit on peak events that you have no control over. School Spirit is cultivated by intention, and that starts by building relationships between the silos within your community. Each group must feel welcome to participate and also able to return to their area of comfort. People do not want to remain on "high spirit alert" every week, and need to be able to breeze back to their curriculum silos.

Take the time to intentionally recognize and celebrate the successes of the many silos within your school. This breath of acknowledgement is often a welcome cool breeze to a department that feels they are doing a good job within their specialty. This is an intentional building of the spirit that can then flow back to your events and activities. It sounds cliché, but if you are a fan of the work of others, they will turn their fans of appreciation in your direction more willingly.

Events and spirit will soar at your school, when you are the wind beneath the wings of your school community. Take a breath and talk about the good things that are happening in your school and people will return the same spirit to you when you need it.

*Dave Conlon*

# Teaching with Toys

*Curious that we spend more time congratulating people who have succeeded than encouraging those who have not.*

*Neil deGrasse Tyson*

Do we learn from play because it is fun, or is there a more cerebral reason for our learning while playing? The answer is a little of both.

People learn best when they use their ‘whole brain’. Children learn better when movement or some part of the motor system is activated. Lectures are considered ‘passive learning’, and this is the type of learning that all, children and adults, have great difficulty paying attention to. We all learn best through active engagement.

Science teachers know that when students run experiments, the participants are much more involved in their learning, especially if they get to set something on fire or blow it up. English teachers know that *Romeo and Juliet* is more interesting and meaningful when students read and act the parts out loud in class. Leadership teachers know that their students learn more because they are directly involved in *Doership* before they learn *Leadership* in any activity they run.

Prior to running an activity, you can use toys and tricks in your classroom to enhance the demonstration aspect of your topic and directly involve your students in their learning. The key point is that the trick or the toy is not the lesson – it teaches a lesson. These toys are designed to introduce, teach or review lessons, and ultimately, to teach students that learning is fun.

Here are two lessons to enhance learning because high school students are never above playing with toys:

## WALLET PHOTO ON YOUR PHONE

At one time, everyone had two or three photos in their wallets that were of significance to the wallet holder. Usually it was a spouse, picture of the kids or the family pet stashed behind your health insurance card.

Students don’t print photos anymore, but they have a complete archive of their present lives on their phones. As a way to get a group to share their life experiences with each other, have students pick two or three photos that would be their “wallet photos” if they could print them. Have them explain to a partner why these pictures are significant.

Ask them to share their single special wallet photo with the group. This activity will allow them to say more than what an Instagram post can ever do and allow them to show the picture that they **like** the most.

*Brent Dickson*

## **Lego lesson:**

Place three identical sets of theme lego in front of 3 pairs of students. (Don’t let each group see what the other is doing.) Instruct them to build the set.

- The first set is just the legos.
- The second set is the legos and only the box or container.
- The third set is the legos and the instructions.

In a very short time, students learn and can understand the importance of having an organized, written plan for an event.

## **Balloon Animals**

Give each student a long balloon and have a completed balloon-animal dog on your desk (simple three fold – look it up on YouTube). Tell the class to inflate their balloons and make the animal they see at the front.

- The long balloons are VERY difficult to inflate the first time, but it gets easier as they reinflate the balloons. Some will be frustrated and may need a pump – a lesson on how things get easier the more you try and when to ask for help.
- After the initial attempts fail at creating the balloon dog, hand an instruction sheet to a student and have them only read out the instructions to the class while facing away from the class – a lesson on effective communication.
- Have another student who has been successful, face the class and demonstrate the technique along with the instructions – a lesson on working with people.

This simple, fun exercise incorporates many lessons on running an event.



## Building Bridges with Mac 'n Cheese

Food is one of the most powerful tools in any leader's tool kit. What do you do when you're celebrating? You go out to eat. You mourn a loss – you eat. You celebrate a wedding – you eat. The list is exhaustive, but one universal thing all humans do is eat and prepare food (some more extreme than others). Food is culture, food is love, food is history, and food is the future. You can bring it into almost any leadership mentality.

One of our big traditions at Archbishop Jordan, during our bonding nights, is something called the family dinner. Everyone takes part in preparing a meal (we've done pizza, pasta, turkey dinner) and the leadership teams all sit and enjoy the meal after we offer up thanks. It is the high point of the night as some of the most informal and powerful bonding between the student leaders happens through the meal.

Multiple studies show that when a family sits down and regularly shares a meal – and are forced to have face to face conversations without cell phones – those children usually perform better at school and are even more likely have a better relationship with food. I like to think that during leadership events with food, where we intentionally sit and bond with our leaders, we help add to their lives. I get to wear a special dual hat of Student Council coordinator at our school as well as one of the Foods teachers, and truly you can bring a change to anyone's day by offering up a home-made dish. I've often coerced teachers to dress up or participate in an event with a simple bribe of lemon loaf or a dish of mac and cheese from scratch.

As a leader armed with food, you can build bridges between the groups and cultures within your school. Think about walking into your cafeteria with a tray of warm, homemade chocolate chip cookies and just handing them out for fun. People are far less hostile and are more open when you break bread and share it. Any leadership program should be able to easily incorporate a respect for food and nutrition into their leadership and school culture.

Food is love made visible, and love is easily shared when you share a meal.

*Justin Gabinet, B.Ed*  
*Teacher-Foods, Leadership*  
*Student Council Coordinator*  
*Archbishop Jordan High School*  
*Sherwood Park, AB*



*The Archbishop Jordan leadership crew breaking bread and lasagna with each other.*

*Remember, we all stumble, every one of us. That's why it's a comfort to go hand in hand.*

*Emily Kimbrough*

### STUDENT ART IS SMART

The hallways and classrooms of elementary schools are always filled with the creative efforts of the students who walk the hallways. For some reason, we feel that high schools should be decorated in a more austere style so the residents do not get too excited by the art on the walls. In fact, schools will hire professionals to paint the main spirit murals in gyms to give a polished feel to the spirit.

The art that appears in your hallways should be from the students who attend the school, and the artists should sign the work and include the year it was created. We have trophies and pictures for athletic efforts in our halls; we should have significant artistic efforts celebrated on our walls in the same manner.

There are those who want to keep their hallways a permanent (prison) beige because they are worried that the murals might be vandalized. Smart people know that students do not vandalize the artwork of their peers. Nothing is better for a student to return to a reunion and see their mural still gracing the halls and walls of your school.

# Become a SHAD Fellow



Let's "see"... Or rather, not see. I don't know where to "look" for a good introduction. Ok, enough with the blind jokes. Here's a proper introduction. My name is Céline Kavanaugh, I am enrolled at a francophone high school in New Brunswick, and I have a visual impairment. I've never had perfect vision, but through the years, I lost complete sight in my left eye, leaving me with 20/200 vision in my right. This understandably comes with many difficulties and hurdles which makes my life a bit different from my peers. A driver's license is out of the question. I also have a hard time finding a part-time job that can accommodate my visual impairment. Reading cash registers, price tags, receipts – they are all very difficult for me to see. These difficulties didn't stop me from becoming a SHAD fellow.

When I first heard of the program, I had my heart set on going. Obviously, when I told my parents about it, they were totally supportive about it, right? Well, somewhat. The thought of letting their blind daughter leave for a month, alone, without knowing anyone made them a little fearful. For me, that was my favourite part about it. I thought, "Oh my gosh, I can leave on my own for a whole month!" In spite of it all, my parents agreed and let me apply. I viewed SHAD as a great opportunity to prove to my parents that I could be independent and that I was prepared for postsecondary studies.

At school, I have a camera attached to a screen which projects what's on the board. At SHAD, I had my phone and a little telescope. That was a big change for me. I liked it. This one change reassured me of my own preparedness.

I think what intrigued me the most about SHAD was the way they made learning so interactive, by also teaching us valuable skills, work ethics, STEAM (science, tech, engineering, arts, and math) and entrepreneurial related subjects you'd never see in high school. At SHAD, I was just like every other student. I used a soldering iron – one thing I never thought I'd ever be able to do with my visual impairment. The professor gave me a trick he thought might help, so I tried it and I was able to solder a circuit board. I also took apart a lawnmower and programmed a robot.

*SHAD is a registered Canadian charity that empowers exceptional high school students – at a pivotal point in their education – to recognize their own capabilities and envision their extraordinary potential as tomorrow's leaders and change makers. Each year, SHAD provides the opportunity for 900 students from across Canada and internationally to attend a month-long summer program, in-residence at one of the host universities in Canada.*



Most people at SHAD didn't even notice my disability until the sun would set and I'd grab someone's arm to guide me, or I'd pull out my telescope in the lecture hall to see the board. I'm not ashamed of my disability; it's my everyday. I adapt, and I live with it, end of story. If I need additional help, I'll ask for it, but I'd rather do things myself beforehand. When I was at SHAD, people didn't question my capabilities; I just had a couple of obstacles others didn't. SHAD introduced me to professionals and other students who had dreams as big as mine, dreams that suddenly seemed within reach. Environmental engineering and working out in the field has been a strong interest of mine, but before SHAD, I never thought of it as a realistic goal. I am now more confident I can find ways to adapt and go into any field of interest. Another passion of mine is Para-Nordic skiing. Obviously, I can't ski alone, or I'd hit a tree or something. But I have a guide who skis in front of me and instructs me of the terrain to come. I will be competing in my first world cup this winter.

On top of all that, at SHAD I made lifetime connections with people just like me. No matter our differences, or the distances between where we grew up, they are family. And if I could redo my SHAD experience, I would wake up for those 7 a.m. recreation activities every morning, just to spend a little bit more time with my 55 other family members.



SHAD has a place for every student with a passion and the willingness to learn, no matter the challenges they face in their daily life. It is a place where people that are different have a chance to not only belong, but to feel empowered by their differences. SHAD helped remind me that my disability brings no limit to my abilities. My way of doing things might be different than my peers but it doesn't make it inferior. It makes me stand out from others.

*Celine Kavanaugh*

For more information on this program, visit: [www.shad.ca](http://www.shad.ca)

*Each of the SHAD campuses offers an immersive program of lectures, workshops, projects and activities. Inside and outside the classroom, SHAD builds on the STEAM foundation, introducing participants to a multi-disciplinary program that offers unique experiences and a new way of understanding the world. Speakers include university professors, business leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators, inspiring students to set aspirational goals.*

*Fight as if you are right;  
listen as if you are wrong.*

*Bob Sutton*

## ASSEMBLY ISSUES

---

Some staff will complain that assemblies take valuable time away from “the curriculum”, but you must take the time to educate your staff as to **why** you have assemblies. An assembly is an opportunity to teach students about how to behave as a group in different situations. The expected behaviour must be outlined to the students and staff before an assembly, as the behaviour for a Remembrance Day assembly is different than that for a pep rally. This will train students to be better behaved in public groups outside of school (such as movie theatres and plays in the community).

These same staff won't attend the assembly because they are catching up on “the curriculum” in the staff room with their peers. Staff **must** attend the assembly and sit with their classes. This will be an opportunity for them to model behaviour and deal with discipline from the students they know. There is nothing worse than staff complaining about student behaviour as they stand along the back talking amongst themselves.

# Jolts!

*Jolts* are brief activities that challenge participants to re-examine their own comfortable assumptions and habitual practices. The following *Jolts* are training tools that will engage your students and focus their attention on your lesson.

## Jolt 1: Draw a Tree

**Synopsis:** Participants are asked to draw a tree, but most will not draw the roots of the tree. As the facilitator, you point out the importance of roots and connect the significance of the omission of the tree's roots to the learning point of paying attention to all parts of a system.

**Time:** 2 minutes for the activity and 5 to 10 minutes for debriefing

**Supplies:** index cards for each participant, pens or pencils

**Instructions:** Ask the participants to draw a tree on the index cards provided. Set a time limit of 4 seconds. Explain that the drawing can be realistic or abstract and must be completed in the time limit given.

**Debrief:** Question the group as to why they drew trees without root systems. Use the exercise to show how we ignore support elements that are not visible. What does that mean to us in Leadership?

## Jolt 2: Ears for Smiley

**Synopsis:** Partners are identified as employee and manager. The employees are first asked to close their eyes and draw the familiar smiley face icon and then a pair of ears on the smiley. Participants discover that the best smiley faces were drawn by participants who were willing to ask for guidance.

**Time:** 5 minutes for the activity and 8 to 10 minutes for debriefing

**Supplies:** index cards for participants, pens or pencils

**Instructions:** Say to the group: “Managers, your task is to make sure that the employee is following my instructions. Employees, your task is to draw a picture of a smiley face. Your smiley should have a circular face, two dots for the eyes, and a curved line for a mouth. Managers, make sure your employees follow my instructions and do not open their eyes until I say so.”

At the end of 30 seconds, ask them to stop and give these instructions: “Employees, keep your eyes closed and transfer your pencil to the opposite hand. Don't open your eyes. You will now add a pair of ears to your smiley face.”

**Debrief:** The point is that performance is improved if people seek guidance and feedback. Discuss the consequences of too much or too little feedback. The best relationship between leader and follower is one of good communication.

**Repeat:** Change roles and flip the paper over. Have the participants try again knowing the consequences of asking and giving feedback.



The above activities are from the book:

*Jolts! : Activities to WAKE UP and ENGAGE Your Participants*  
by Sivasailam Thiagarajan

# To Thine Own Self Be True

One of the first key concepts explained in the classic *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* is that of the “Personal Bank Account.” The notion behind the Personal Bank Account is that we each have a bank account or balance sheet with ourselves. And like a real-life bank account, we make both deposits and withdrawals, with the account balance reflecting which of those are done more frequently.

Examples of deposits include keeping promises to yourself, forgiving yourself, taking time to refresh or renew yourself, or using your talents. Withdrawals would be the opposite; breaking promises, beating yourself up, burning out, being whom others want you to be.

A positive balance in the Personal Bank Account builds confidence, allows momentum to be established for future endeavours, and provides a wellspring from which to give to others. A negative balance then shakes confidence, establishes a pattern of falling short, and in turn can lead to isolation or despair.



There is much talk today about concepts like anxiety, resilience, and grit. Experts proclaim that today’s teens experience high levels of anxiety and low levels of resilience and grit. They talk about what can be done systemically to address these concerns, whether it be how we parent, coach minor sports, how we teach, how employers deal with teens, and so on.

Perhaps one answer lies in something as simple as being aware of one’s own personal bank account and taking the necessary steps to make those valuable deposits.

Set simple landmarks for each day and experience the boost that comes from keeping this word to yourself. Use this momentum to tackle larger tasks. Forgive yourself if you break such a promise and start again. Use what you’re good at and enjoy, for something bigger than yourself; don’t be button-holed into doing certain things or acting a certain way based on the expectations of others.

“To Thine Own Self Be True” is a quote from Polonius in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Polonius was not privy to the concept of the Personal Bank Account and in the context of Shakespeare’s time the words can also be taken to mean “put your own interests or benefit first.” Make a promise to yourself and keep it. Repeat. If you take one step back, forgive yourself, regroup, renew, and take two steps forward. Build momentum surely and slowly for bigger objectives. Build up a positive balance in your personal bank account and use it as a springboard to explore what matters to you and how to bring that out to the world. Don’t be afraid to put your own interests to the forefront for your own well-being. You will feel the difference, and over time those around you will feel it too.

Jeff Gerber  
Waterloo Oxford Secondary School  
Baden, ON

*Don’t be seduced into thinking that that which does not make a profit is without value.*

Arthur Miller

## RELIABILITY IS THE KEY

The important thing that all currently successful people have in common, whether they be in academics, athletics or the arts, is the fact that they all were not successful when they started their journey.

It goes without saying, that along the way, these successful individuals worked hard, had some lucky breaks, and set goals for their progress; but every single successful person had to be **reliable**. This means that they could be counted upon by people who were willing to help them along the way.

It doesn’t matter how many natural or practiced skills you have, to be successful you **must** learn to be reliable. We all have heard of supremely talented individuals who have gone nowhere because they have not been reliable to their team or their audience.

When you are reliable, people trust you and will assist you on your journey to being a leader in your field. Nobody does it all by themselves, you can rely on that!

*It takes a great deal of  
bravery to stand up to our  
enemies, but just as much to  
stand up to our friends.*

*J.K. Rowling*

### **Above and Beyond**

is the official newsletter of the Canadian Student Leadership Association. The newsletter is published 3 times a year for schools all across Canada.

To learn more about membership, go to [www.studentleadership.ca/join/](http://www.studentleadership.ca/join/)

You can contact us at:  
**CSLA Publications**  
268 West Acres Drive  
Guelph, ON N1H 7P1  
Tel: 1 519 222 6718  
Fax: 1 519 821 0035

**Canadian Student  
Leadership Association**

## **Resources**

Be sure to visit the CSLA website for more lesson plans, activity ideas and a complete list of resources.  
**[studentleadership.ca](http://studentleadership.ca)**



**Canadian  
Student  
Leadership  
Association**

This newsletter has been printed with the generous support of Friesen Yearbooks.  
[www.friesens.com/yearbook](http://www.friesens.com/yearbook)

## **Letter of Gratitude**

*I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought,  
and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.*

*G.K. Chesterton*

Young leaders benefit from establishing the habit of expressing gratitude. This is something that must be taught to avoid the aura of 'entitlement' that so many young people seem to have. Gratitude can be taught by consciously recognizing the efforts of people who have helped the young person along the way.

Students will develop and learn good leadership habits because of someone who is either a wonderful role model or a caring mentor. This could be a family member, friend, advisor, teacher, coach, or a leader of a youth group. Sometimes it's a role model from the wider community or even a character in a book or a movie.

Have your leadership students pick one person who influenced them in a positive way from their contacts and one person who has no idea of their leadership influence. Ask them to write a thank you note to both of these people considering and including the following points:

- What lesson did you learn?
- Why was it important for you to learn it?
- How have you used this lesson in your life now?

A hand-written note that arrives in the mail is always a wonderful, surprise thank you for the recipient. Many will not remember or know the influence they have created in this young person. The practice of writing to a personal contact and a hero is a great way of coalescing the lessons learned by the young leader. It is also a good habit to learn as thank you notes are being used less and less by young people.

One thing that you can do as an advisor to reinforce this activity, will happen when the student leader asks you for a reference letter. Ask them to write a note of gratitude to someone who made a difference to them and put it inside an addressed envelope. You will trade your letter of reference for their special note of gratitude. The habit becomes stronger as it's not just a leadership activity created by their teacher. Gratitude should become an important part of their leadership attitude and behaviour.

